

# THE QUIVER

— Saturday, March 13, 1869. —



"The confusion caused them to feel something like dismay."—p. 357.

## ESTHER WEST.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "PEGGY OGLIVIE'S INHERITANCE."

### CHAPTER XLVII.—NO ANSWER.

IT was Thursday before Easter at last, and Kate was at Redhurst at an early hour. It was her first visit since the day when her father had refused to listen to her prayer to be taken back to her old home,

and it did not appear likely to be a comfortable one to either him or her. Whether it was that the memory of the refusal stirred her to renewed soreness, or that her grief at the thought of leaving England was in-

tensified at sight of the scene of her happy girlhood, her looks and speech alike spoke of ill-concealed and bitterly resented suffering. She took up the position of a not very welcome stranger, instead of a daughter of the house, and managed to stand aloof both from love and pity.

Her father took pains, by every tender courtesy, to win her back. He would have given anything to have her open her heart to him, to win her to acknowledge that he was in the right, as he knew her better judgment was already telling her; but his efforts were unavailing. Once or twice, when he tried to introduce the subject, she set it coldly aside. If he could have seen the passionate grief in which she indulged in secret, he would have been more troubled still.

She went about the place alone, followed by the old blind house-dog, whom she had often hugged in the passionate griefs of her childhood, once sobbing herself to sleep with her head pillowed on his side. But this was a grief which no sleep would soothe. She had awakened to life-long disappointment, and she knew not how to bear it. To have her wishes disregarded, her influence unfelt, her life emptied at once of freedom, and love, and joy—this was what she had to bear. Besides the simple natural sorrow of parting from all whom she had loved, she had the terrible consciousness that she did not, and could not love as she ought the man whose will had become her law.

The afternoon brought Mr. Palmer and Milly—every afternoon of the holidays was to see them there. They were only partly aware of Kate's trouble, and were too happy themselves to be able fully to sympathise with it. Milly was very sorry for her sister's departure; but if her husband wished it, Kate would be sure to get reconciled to it in time, and, doubtless, all would go well; she and her husband would come back again. For her own part, Milly would have preferred staying at home, but she would have gone round the world with Herbert, and though Harry was not like Herbert, Kate must like going with him.

This was the strain in which she spoke comfort, with the effect of making one of her hearers irritable, and the others apprehensive.

The little family circle no longer thought, no longer felt alike; the chain of sympathy was broken. They were almost uncomfortable till Esther arrived, and introduced, naturally and from another point of view, the one subject which occupied the thoughts of all.

The evening passed in discussing the voyage, its discomforts and the alleviations of which these were capable; the country to which they were bound, and its social and political prospects, of which Mr. Palmer took the gloomy, and Mr. Vaughan the hopeful view. It was most unlike the evenings which the same group had often passed there. There was no gaiety

where all had once been gay. They were grave and subdued, like people who meet for the last time. An undefined feeling of this kind crept over them, and deepened as the evening advanced. When music was asked for, Constance and Esther, who sang well together, seemed to choose the saddest songs, till they seemed to breathe the very air of sighs. Tears were unshed, but they were not far from gathering, when Kate took her sister's place and dashed into a light and bright, but noisy Italian song, which jarred on everybody. Esther felt glad when the evening came to an end.

The services of Good Friday had a salutary influence on this unsatisfactory state of things. It united them once more in feelings at once tender and sacred. Their own trials became insignificant in the contemplation of the sufferings of the highest and holiest.

"How dear she can be," said Constance to Esther, when the day was done, and Kate, though silent, had been warmly affectionate to her, and almost penitent toward her father. "Oh, Esther, what is to become of her?"

It was very late indeed, or rather very early, when Constance retired from Esther's room through a small dressing-room which opened on her own. She almost wondered at herself that, during that long conference on things temporal and spiritual, she had not been betrayed into some confidence which must have led to the disclosure of her secret, or, rather, Mr. Carrington's; but he was not mentioned. And Esther, too, retired wondering at the reticence of her friend, and almost inclined to think that there was nothing in the hint which Mrs. Carrington had so cleverly conveyed.

On Saturday—how desperately fast the days went by!—Esther, accompanied by both Kate and Constance, went down to Mr. Wiggett's garden to visit little Mary, whom Esther had conveyed thither on her way to Redhurst. The garden were its soberest and tenderest hues of brown and green. Patches of rich, smooth, freshly-turned mould, alternated with patches of springing plants. The borders were not gay, but the spring flowers showed here and there in white and gold; and, in the orchard, the plums had put on their light, snowy blossoms. Outside in the fields, which made part of the garden, men were sowing breadths of carrots, parsnips, savoy, kale, and all their kindred. Inside, in the flower garden, Mr. Wiggett himself was sowing sweet peas, mignonette, stocks, and other hardy annuals, planting, and grafting, and training his wall fruit. In the former of these occupations he was being actively assisted by little Mary. He had written her name in big letters all along one of the borders, and she had strewed out of her own hands the seed into the furrows, which were to blossom into "Mary Potter" in white and purple candy tuft.

They had just finished the task when Esther and

her friends appeared. Mary was a little disappointed that there was nothing to be seen at present for her labour. The seed was covered up, and she could only point to the bare blank earth, and assure them that the wonder was hidden there.

Little Mary's beauty and grace captivated every one. The child's gaiety was always tender; great pleasures—and her visits to the garden had been great to her beyond comparison with all the pleasures of her life—exalted rather than excited her. Kate began to court her acquaintance, and Mary, after a little consideration, inclined to be friends, especially as she had seen "the lady" before. "The lady" was her distinctive name for her sister's grandest and gayest visitor.

While Kate chatted with the child, Constance was in full conference with Mr. Wiggett concerning her greenhouse plants. He invited her to come and inspect his, and as they went off together, Mary, not choosing to lose sight of one friend in gaining another, led Kate to follow in the same direction; Esther brought up the rear.

The greenhouse was far gayer than the garden, and as the whole party passed through its narrow door in single file, Esther was left outside. Looking up through the glass of a similar structure, she caught sight of a pale face and gleaming grey eyes. It was Philip, and he was looking full at her. Her ready smile was answered, flashed back on her with all the light of his singularly radiant one. But Esther did not stop there. She had come to see him as well as her little sister, and when she saw him she naturally went straight to him, turned from the door she was entering, and entered where he was sitting in the warm, moist forcing-house.

"Are you better?" she asked, her voice full of the tender reverence with which she had learned to regard him.

"Yes," he answered in his abrupt way, adding, hurriedly, "I have been too long idle. I am going back to work on Tuesday."

"You know that we are going away?" she returned, not knowing what to say, for his manner checked her speech.

Another and yet more abrupt "yes." One unused to him might have construed it into, "What does that matter to me?" but Esther, looking in his face, saw there an expression of acute pain. He was silent for a moment or two. He could not grow paler, but a livid hue spread round his eyes. He had risen from his seat to meet her, and now he was obliged to sink into it again.

"You are ill," cried Esther, turning faint, as she saw him apply his handkerchief to his lips, and felt rather than saw that the red tide of life had burst its barriers again. "I fear you are very ill."

He looked up almost gaily, a sort of chivalrous defiance in his manner, and deprecating her concern, whispered, "I shall be better presently."

She stood waiting, unwilling to leave him thus.

"Let me call Mr. Wiggett," she said, at length.

He shook his head; and looking round, she could see the others moving away. Kate nodded as she passed with little Mary. They were gone to explore some other corner of the garden.

When Philip recovered himself she was standing over him. She had pushed one of the casements open to give him air, and her eyes were full of tears, so that she could not meet his.

"I must go now," she said, and half held out her hand, and then withdrew it, as there was no corresponding movement on his part.

"I shall not see you again," he said, hurriedly. "I have got a job down in the country, and when I come back to the old place you will be gone."

There was a tone so sad in his voice, that it brought before Esther vividly the almost desolate loneliness of his lot.

"I shall have to work all the harder," he said, half to himself.

She looked questioningly at him.

"I shall have to work hard to forget you," came from his lips, while the light of an almost overpowering passion flashed into his face, "or rather to forget myself," he added, with a gasp, and rising to his feet again.

Esther stood for a moment wavering; the next, she laid her hand upon his arm, and, scarcely knowing what she said, faltered, "Come with us."

His heart gave a great bound, and he seemed to gain a sudden strength. He took her hand and carried it to his lips, and then held it in both of his.

He comprehended in a moment all that her words implied of happiness in the future. He saw before him a land of promise—a land where men of nerve and brain like his have room to grow great. He knew that in that future she offered him herself.

"God bless you, for ever and ever!" he cried, looking into her charmed eyes. "But it must not be. I shall not die yet—I shall do some more work before I go; but I carry the warrant here within me, signed in that broken vein of mine. You have given me joy enough to last me till the end."

Little Mary came back breathless with running, to find her sister and Philip standing hand in hand, and looking "glad and sorry," as she phrased it, "all at once." A long, silent clasp of the hands, a long, half-tender, half-mournful gaze, never to be forgotten by either, and they parted. Esther found herself walking down the garden path by little Mary's side, with a strange, hitherto unknown feeling, as if she no longer belonged to herself. Not even to Constance did she breathe a word of what had passed, and Constance, full of her own anxious thoughts, did not notice her absence of mind.

Constance, who was always on the look out for the post, had her mind set at rest at last. In the evening a letter came to her from Mr. Carrington. It ran:

DEAR CONSTANCE,—You will be glad to hear that I have had it out with my mother, and that my own mind is quite made up. I come up to town on Tuesday, and will lose no time in learning my future fate.—Ever yours sincerely,  
R. CARRINGTON.

"Just like him. An answer and no answer," thought Constance, as she put the note into her pocket, and tried to look unconcerned.

#### CHAPTER XLVIII.

##### TO GRAVESEND.

THE brief Easter holidays were over and gone. Constance accompanied her sister to town in order to be with her all the time that remained till her departure. Mr. Vaughan was to join them a few days later, and to go with them to Plymouth, where they were to embark. Kate's improvement had been transient enough; now and then she relented, but for the most part she took refuge from her grief in a stony quietness, which her father and sister knew to be unreal, and which gave them the keenest pain.

The Potters were to embark at Gravesend, but Constance would not say farewell to her friend till the very last. She would see her again when the ship touched at Plymouth. Nothing whatever had been heard of Mr. Carrington. Constance had called at his mother's house, though she was ready to quarrel with herself for having done so; but they had not returned to town. It was a mystery—or rather it was no mystery to Constance, for she solved it immediately. The hero of the piece had turned faint-hearted after all. He was afraid of the risk of matrimony. She had heard him talk of it as a risk under the most favourable circumstances, so she only judged him out of his own mouth. His conduct, however, went far towards curing her of her too great regard for him; and that he was not worthy of Esther was the conclusion at which she speedily arrived.

At length the day of departure came. On the morrow the ship was to leave Gravesend, and the passengers must be on board the day before. Everything was ready in the Potter household. The whole family had assembled once more in the dismantled house in the midst of their numerous packages, having slept and breakfasted in one of the least disreputable coffee-houses in the neighbourhood. The bulk of their belongings had been shipped at the dock, but Martin and Willie were to be the pioneers of the party, and to take care of what remained and see it safe on board, and for this purpose they were to set off by an earlier train. They could hardly conceal their impatience to be on the move, while Bob and Walter, though uneasy at the sight of their mother's sad face and frequent sighs, and Esther's grave, pale looks, found it difficult to keep down their spirits.

At last the cart, belonging to the neighbouring greengrocer, which was to convey the baggage, arrived, not before Bob had been twice sent off to

expedite its coming, and Martin and Willie assumed the command of loading it—a command which the two younger brothers for once obeyed with alacrity. When it was ready, nothing would serve Master Johnny but going with his brothers; so, after a brief opposition from his mother, he was suffered to ride away in triumph on the top of a pile of boxes, while the others walked by the side of the cart. Mary could not bear the division of the party, and her opposition had been conquered by the promise that they would all wait at the station and go by the same train. It was a sight to watch the boys go off, beckoning back so cheerfully, leaving behind not a single regret, full of hope, and life, and energy. But to their happy smiles their mother's eyes were blind, blind with smarting tears.

She was still further troubled when the twins, instead of waiting to go with her, set off to walk by themselves. It seemed as if she could not keep her flock together any longer, an omen of the lasting separation which must sooner or later come.

Timothy Wiggett had insisted on seeing them off. He had slept in town for the purpose, and was at Sutton's Alley in good time, with a cab. Into this, Mary and Esther and Sarah and little Polly were to be put, with sundry small packages not entrusted to the cart: he himself was to ride on the box.

At the last moment Esther missed her mother, and went through the house to find her. A stifled sob came from one of the empty rooms. It was the room in which her father died. She paused at the door for a little, and then entered softly and stood by Mary's side. She was crouching on the floor with her face hidden in her hands. Very softly Esther whispered, "Mother." The name from her had, even yet, a newness and sweetness to Mary's ear. "Mother, we are all waiting for you," repeated Esther, and Mary felt the comfort of the wisely chosen words, and rose and suffered Esther to lead her down-stairs and place her in the cab.

At the station, Mr. Wiggett, under Esther's direction, managed to get the whole family together in one second-class compartment. Mary's anxiety that they should all be together, seemed to increase, and the carelessness of the twins in the matter of gratifying her wish was painful to witness. Martin and Willie absented themselves for a time, in their eagerness to see that everything was right, and Bob and Walter in their eagerness to see everything, right or wrong. But at last Timothy, by dint of warding off all intruders, and nearly wedging himself into the carriage window, got them all together, and shut them in, just as the train moved off.

On the way to Gravesend little Mary sat on Timothy Wiggett's knee, and fell asleep there. Timothy had not much to say. That there was nothing worth saying in a world where such things as this went on, was pretty much his view of matters mundane in the present crisis. He looked



down at the child from time to time, and touched her cheek with his fat hand wistfully. It was unlike his bright little Polly to be sleeping thus. She was breathing hard, too, and had got a bright red rose on either delicate cheek.

"She is wearied out with all the bustle and excitement of these last few days," said Mary, noticing the look. "My own head aches with it; and she woke and cried with hers a good deal in the night."

"She's too tender for this sort of thing," he replied, shaking his head. "It's a bad business altogether, and if you like to turn back yet, you'll all have a roof to shelter ye as long as my name's Timothy."

A faint smile at what seemed only a mild joke was all the answer Mary gave.

They were soon at their present destination. Mary continually looking round for the straying members of her family with the distracted air of a lost person, was put into the boat last, and was the last, save Timothy, to leave it. They were all on the deck before her.

But what a deck! None of the party, except Martin and Willie, had ever before seen an emigrant ship, and the confusion caused them to feel something like dismay. They had to move on, to give room to fresh comers, through narrow lanes, between piles of goods. Bales, barrels, boxes were being swung in the air from the boats and lighters alongside, and dropped into the depths, and rolled, and bumped, and knocked about on every side. The vessel was an auxiliary screw, and they were coaling her, and black dust flew about, and water floated on the slippery planks.

Martin and Willie guided the party, for they had had the advantage of a previous visit to the ship, under the care of Harry West. They led the way first to their own quarters. The condition of things there was not such as to reassure them. Down the steep, breakneck ladder they could catch a glimpse of the confusion reigning in the semi-darkness below. At the very mouth of this pit two men were squabbling angrily.

"I say, bundle your traps out o' this. That's my berth. I been and took it a week ago."

"No, I won't. First come first served, that's my motto," shouted the defendant, who was evidently of opinion that possession is nine-tenths of the law.

"You won't, won't you! Then I'll make you," retorted the claimant, and was proceeding to a summary ejection, when the appearance of some constituted authority, to which both appealed at once, rendered anything further unintelligible.

"You needn't go down just now," said Martin, catching the look of consternation on his mother's face; "but we have got very good places, not far from the entrance, where we will have plenty of light and air; further back it is rather dark and close."

"What a dreadful place!" groaned Mary.

"Will you have to live down there among these rough men?" asked Esther, her face reflecting the dread on her mother's.

"Men must take the world as they find it, mother," said Martin, with an assumption of manliness, which, however, became him well; "they won't do much good in it if they don't," he added, turning to Esther.

"But the boys," she whispered, for even a glance had told her that the men down there were not the associates that a sister would choose for her brothers, or a mother for her sons. There was worse than rudeness in one or two of the faces she had caught a glimpse of.

"Will and I will take care of them the best we can," he whispered in reply, as they moved away. "We've had plenty of the same sort of thing, and if they take to it, it won't be for want of seeing the ugly side of it. But it isn't in them. They only get to hate it the more, the closer they come to it."

Esther drew but small comfort from this philosophy of her brother's, and could not help wishing that the boys had not been separated from them, but she said no more.

They went on, looking down into another similar pit, where a number of women seemed to be preparing for an early dinner amid much talking, and laughing, and screaming, and scolding.

Esther was truly thankful when they reached their cabin—narrow and confined as it was—to find it comparatively clean and quiet, and capable of affording some degree of privacy.

"There seems ten times as much coming in as the ship can possibly hold," said Martin to a good-natured sailor.

"There's plenty more to come yet," he answered, laughing. "Never fear, we'll stow it safe enough."

"And how long will this confusion last?"

"Till we're well out to sea."

"I wish we were," he said, thoughtfully.

"So do I," echoed the sailor.

Little Mary was crying with her head again, and complaining of the harsh noises, and not all the glorious things to be found in an immense packet of sweets, with which Timothy had provided himself, could tempt her to raise it from her mother's shoulder and share in the refreshment, to which her brothers were soon doing ample justice, standing round the cabin door, while the others sat within.

There were other two who turned away from the comfortless meal. Esther and her mother felt as if the first morsel would choke them. They, too, wished the ship would sail. The agony of parting must last as long as they were linked to the shore. They longed to have it over, or even for the night to come and hide them from the noise and tumult, and suffer them to weep in secret.

(To be continued.)

## THE UNITY OF CHRIST'S BODY.

"Now are they many members, yet but one body,"—1 Cor. xii. 20. "There is one body,"—Eph. iv. 4.



IN the early days of the Christian era, the Gospel was announced under the figure of a kingdom:—"Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was the proclamation, not only of the great herald of the Christian faith, but of the great Founder of it. The notion of the kingdom was in harmony with Jewish expectations, and laid strong hold on the hopes of Christ's followers, and on the minds of the general Jewish public. The strength with which the idea girded up the hopes of Christ's own disciples, is seen in the eager question put to him *after* his resurrection: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom?" The impression which the notion of the kingdom made upon the popular mind, is seen in the distorted views, or rather the perverted views of that kingdom, which were urged as grounds for the condemnation of the Redeemer.

Though the idea of the kingdom was never lost sight of, and the Christians always looked forward to the return of Christ to his kingdom, yet there seemed to grow up beside it another and more tender view of the Christian community, under the figure of a family. Our Lord left his disciples the commandment of Love. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, that ye love one another." And this love soon began to be regarded as a kind of family love. "I ascend to my Father, and your Father," said our Saviour, teaching his followers to regard each other as members of the same family and household. The first converts acknowledged the relationship in practice: none said "that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts iv. 32). And as time wore on, and Christians died and were buried, the little band of survivors were cheered by their faith in the bonds which still united them and their lost ones; knowing that from one Father "the whole family in heaven and earth" was named (Eph. iii. 15).

But the union between the followers of the Redeemer was represented by a closer emblem—expressive of intenser unity, deeper sympathy, and more complete harmony than the notion of either a kingdom or a family could convey. "There is one body," said the apostle.

They are not bound together by the ardour of patriotism, the obligation of common laws, and the devotion of loyalty to the same king. They are not even bound by the deeper and dearer bonds of a loving brotherhood, the inexpressible yearnings for the common home, and the loving Father; for kingdoms may be rent by faction, and families

divided by feud. But they are bound by a common nature, animated by the breath of the same Spirit, moved by the impulse of the same will—"holding by" the same Head. Citizens of heaven (Eph. ii. 19, Phil. iii. 20) they are; but they are more: they are sons of the same Father (1 John iii. 1). Brethren of Christ (Heb. ii. 11) they are; but they are more: they are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Eph. v. 30).

It is this union which the apostle speaks of; but we can readily see that when the apostle has the notion of union, or, we may say, unity in his mind, it is unity of nature, but diversity of function; unity of impulse, but diversity of operation; or, in brief, unity, but not uniformity. In other words, the subject contained in our heading is this:—The conditions of unity and the limits and latitude of diversity.

Taking the latter—the limits and latitude of diversity—under our notice, we remember that this diversity is seen in the existence of "many members." Looking at these various members, we are struck by the differences of form. On investigation, we discover that these differences of form are explained by the differences of function—"all members have not the same office." Take the eye and the ear for examples; nothing can be greater than the difference which is discernible in their form and appearance. The one consists of mainly convex surfaces, the other of mainly concave. The very texture of their coating differs, and while the one partakes of the general complexion of the body, the other is brightly coloured, and reflects, in varying lights, innumerable and happy changes of hue. But, differing so greatly, they are each adapted to their particular function. A wave of melody rolls along the air, and the ear thrills under the successive undulations, and drinks in

"The voice, through melting mazes running,  
Untwisting all the chains that tie  
The hidden soul of harmony."

But the eye is untouched by the vibrations which occasion such tumultuous pleasure in the vestibule and labyrinth of the organ of sound.

Just so is there a difference in the thoughts, feelings, and, to a certain extent, in the opinions of the various members of Christ's body. That it should be so, can hardly be wondered at. When we consider the poverty of language, the general want of facility and accuracy of expression amongst men, the shades of meaning which habit and association have led us to affix to certain words, the general readiness to adopt certain phrases, and without much perception of their meaning, to cling by them as though they were the mysterious

guardians of truth, and to look with suspicion on all teaching which does not repeat the familiar shibboleth; when we consider the marvellous varieties of human minds—the poetical, the prosaic, the ardent, the nonchalant, the chivalrous, the practical—we cannot wonder that a very great latitude of sentiment should prevail. This was the case even in the days of the apostles—at a time when there were the living witnesses of Christ's life and death to appeal to. Even then, meats and holy days, and days of fasting and days of thanksgiving were held in differing estimation; and the apostle's rule was simple, sensible, and intelligible. (Would that it had better been regarded!) "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. . . . Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Rom. xiv. 5—13).

They sin, therefore, who condemn their brethren in Christ because they differ in form from themselves. But these differences of form and function minister to the well-being of the body. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (1 Cor. xii. 21).

We discover, then, in the diversity of form the wise decree of God, that each member should be thus the better fitted for its peculiar function; and in each being fitted for some different function, we see that the unity of the body is best sustained—"God having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked."

Hence the very want of uniformity in the body is its greatest unity.

And so it is with Christ's Church. "There are many members, and all members have not the same office." But each member best promotes the welfare and preserves the unity of the body, by doing his duty in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call him.

So much for the diversity in the members of the body. We turn now to the question of the conditions of unity in the body.

The apostle gives this condition:—"Holding the Head," or the unity of the body depends on connection with the Head. This forms the real centre of union between the various members of the body, and all disconnected with the Head are not of that one body. Union with Christ, then, is the essential condition of belonging to the Church or body of Christ.

But when we consider this union under the

figure of a body, we notice two modes of connection, both of which are indispensable. There is a mysterious and unseen—an inward bond of connection—a connection which is more of spirit than of matter—the subtle connection of life. The life of the body, of the head, must be in each of the members, else they are mere dead limbs, useless and harmful encumbrances of the body, not fulfilling their functions as living members. The apostle made the possession of spiritual vitality a condition of membership with Christ. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." And again, speaking of the great family of the sons of God, he says:—"We . . . have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13). This connection, though unseen, is therefore real, and necessary to the unity and well-being of the body of Christ's Church; but it is a connection which we cannot discern. The limb may be chill and powerless, but "the sensibility may be roused; the nerves which convey the impression may yet so far retain their property, that other motor nerves may be influenced through them; the muscles may be once more concatenated and drawn into a simultaneous action." We cannot pronounce the seemingly lifeless member to be no longer endowed with vital energy; we cannot discern the *spiritual* state of those around us; we cannot affirm of this man or that, or of this community or that—"They have not the Spirit." "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" Since the days of miraculous powers of spiritual discernment, we have not been able to determine such questions. Good it were if men no longer arrogated to themselves the power of doing so!

But though we cannot judge of the reality of spiritual life—i.e., of the hidden connection between the members of the body, we are not without means of judging concerning the other condition of unity—viz., the visible connection. We can see whether the hand or the foot is bound by the material links of connection with the whole body; and this at least we know, that where this outward and visible connection does not exist, there can be no subtle and spiritual union. The severed limb has ceased to be a part of the living body. Hence we can see how important it is to determine what are the tests of what we may call—still employing the language of our figure—the physical connection between the Head and the members.

What are these tests?

When our Lord appeared after his resurrection, he appealed to some such tests:—"Handle me," he said, "and see; for a spirit hath not *flesh* and *bones*." And these we may take as our tests of physical connection: for the flesh and bones are parts, and necessary parts, in the formation of every member of the body.

To the bones we owe the framework, the strength, and stature of our bodies.

To the flesh we owe the fulness and beauty of our frames.

In the Christian system we find two elements which correspond to these. We have *truth*, which gives definiteness, strength, and reality to our religion.

We find on turning to Scripture that this truth is made a necessary condition of membership of the Christian Church. From all candidates for admission a confession of faith was required; and the Gospel, or the good news, which detailed the scheme for man's restoration, was jealously guarded, lest injudicious or unworthy advocates should pervert or misrepresent it. In the maintenance of truth, the apostles saw their Master honoured: in its perversion, they saw him dishonoured; and hence the strong language which they employed—which was not the language of hot-headed and narrow-minded bigots, but of large-hearted Christ-loving men. "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed" (Gal. i. 8). "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 10, 11). "There is . . . one faith" (Eph. iv. 5).

But, besides doctrinal truth, there was added another condition. It was not enough that the members of Christ's Church should be but professors of a barren orthodoxy, they must also show Christian charity. Though he was never so orthodox a member of the Christian Church, never so devoted a supporter of it, yet, if he had not charity, he was nothing. And the mutual growth of these two tended to the development of the body of Christ—the maturing of the union between the Head and the members: for so writes the apostle, "Speaking the *truth in love* (we) may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the *effectual working* in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in *love*" (Eph. iv. 15, 16).

There is a reactionary and mutually beneficial influence in these—truth and love. It is the love of Christ which binds us to his truth. It is his truth which teaches us love. Truth will give stability, and love will give gentleness to our conduct.

We would conclude with some practical thoughts.

Beware of a faith which lacks either of these two elements. Beware of the faith, which, however orthodox, is hard, gaunt, and chill, so thinly clad in the natural flesh of loving deeds that you start from it as from an apparition.

Beware, too, of a faith which has no doctrinal, Christian truth to give it form; which, wanting the framework which alone can give it uprightness and strength, is ever in danger of being moulded into the most monstrous shapes.

Truth will give a framework—clear and erect. Love will give that soft and curved surface, which graces while it marks the outline of the figure.

And two things will aid us in reaching this sweet harmony—humility and activity. Humility, that we may not seek out other work, or to perform other functions than our own; not to break the concord of the Christian banquet-hall, by taking seats higher than our own; but in lowliness to be content with the place God has given us.

Activity in the discharge, with all our might, of the good that our hands find to do.

And, above all, drink deep and often from the great fountains of truth—God's Word and God's Throne of Grace. So shall we gather nourishment and strength for the fulfilment of our own work, and thus shall we best promote the well-being of the Christian Church, best preserve its unity, and carry out God's will—"that there should be no schism in the body."

W. BOYD CARPENTER, M.A.

## MR. SOMERS'S LETTER.

**N**ATURE had dealt very unequally by Mrs. Aytoun's two daughters. Florence, the eldest, had a pretty face and graceful figure, and, what in her case was no less a gift of nature, a charm of manner and sweetness of temper that won affection, and secured her friends.

Her sister, Felicia, though several years younger, looked, in fact, the elder, and was generally taken to be so. She was plain, abrupt in manner, and too indifferent to take any trouble to please. And yet this apparent hardness was but surface deep;

Felicia had a warmth and generosity of feeling, of which her manner, always undemonstrative, and occasionally ungracious, gave little indication. If there was a question of trouble or inconvenience, Felicia was the one applied to; if a disagreeable walk had to be taken on a cold day, or a tiresome piece of business arranged, it was Felicia whom Mrs. Aytoun would propose should undertake it, and who invariably assented—if not as though it were a pleasure to oblige, at least without thought of sparing herself.

Florence, on the other hand, enjoying all the





(Drawn by WILLIAM L. THOMAS.)

"Their two faces appeared in contrast."—p. 363.

lawful privileges of the eldest, and a good many besides; petted by her mother, and attended to in society, became a little—just a very little—spoilt. She thought quite sufficiently highly of her own attractions, and considered it only right and natural that she should have, in all things, the pre-eminence over Felicia.

Mrs. Aytoun had ambitious views for her pretty daughter—visions of a rich, or a great marriage; and Florence was not slow in acquiring her mother's sentiments, and fully shared these aspirations, as long as her affections were perfectly disengaged; but when a spark of real love touched her heart, then she felt how cold and unsatisfying is worldly ambition.

Among the guests at one time most frequent at Mrs. Aytoun's, was Walter Locke, between whom and Florence an attachment sprang up. It was undeclared in words, yet they understood each other. But Walter was only a young barrister, who had his way entirely to make in life, and Mrs. Aytoun pronounced it a thing that "would not do." She spoke to her daughter, and succeeded in convincing her that it was best to end the affair at once, before it had gone further. So Walter Locke was banished the house; that is, no further invitations were extended to him, and when he ventured to call he was so coldly received, even by Florence herself, that he understood his sentence, and came no more.

She and her sister took to visiting among the poor; and did, we may hope, a great deal of good, though they were occasionally considerably imposed upon. They read much on a variety of subjects, and they went moderately into society, where they formed many agreeable acquaintances, and some valuable friendships.

So life proceeded in a useful and cheerful course, when Felicia received an invitation to spend a few weeks in the north of Scotland, at the Highland residence of the head of her family. It was autumn, and the large country house was filled with company and animated with amusements. Among the guests was a Mr. Somers, a man of high standing and considerable fortune, whose name had become well known in connection with, or rather as the originator of, various benevolent plans of the day. He was unmarried, about five-and-thirty years of age, and for many years had devoted his wealth and influence to improving the condition of the poor. In the society assembled at Craven Hall, there was little congenial to his taste. The perpetual boating, croquet, and luncheon parties he regarded as a great waste of time, and the artificial airs of most of the young ladies, any one of whom would gladly have received his attentions, bored and repelled him. But with Felicia he had a great deal of satisfactory and pleasant conversation; they would often walk together to

the schools on the estate, where he would examine the children, or listen with patience and interest to her clear and useful instructions. Then, as they walked home through the beautiful Highland scenery, he would unfold, to an attentive and intelligent listener, those schemes which occupied his own thoughts.

In her letters home, Felicia spoke frankly of the new acquaintance she had made, and of the pleasure she found in his society. After one of these letters, over which Mrs. Aytoun had been pondering thoughtfully for some minutes, she observed to her daughter, "What a pity it is, Florence, darling, that you are not there instead of Felicia! I could gladly receive this man as my son-in-law."

"I hope you will be asked to do so, mamma," replied Florence, cheerily; "and I think it is better as it is. Poor Felicia is not likely to meet with many people who think so much of her."

"No, dear, it is not best as it is," answered Mrs. Aytoun. "Men are seldom indifferent to looks. Mr. Somers may have great regard and friendship for Felicia, and it is all very well in its way; but nothing more will come of it."

"A Platonic attachment," observed Florence; "Felicia is rather given to that sort of thing, at least to female intimacies. I don't remember her having a friendship with a gentleman before."

When the visit had drawn to a close, Felicia gave Mr. Somers a frank, unaffected invitation to call at her mother's house, should it happen to be convenient. He replied that he believed he would shortly spend some little time in that neighbourhood; and accordingly, soon after her return, he one morning walked in.

Being introduced to Mrs. and Miss Aytoun, he met them less as entire strangers than as persons with whom he had a right to be well acquainted. As Florence held out her white hand to him, with frank willingness to acknowledge her sister's friend, his eye lingered for a moment on her face; perhaps she struck him as prettier than he had supposed a sister of Felicia's likely to be. Soon—very soon—he was established in an intimacy with the family, as cordial and easy as though it had subsisted for months. Some part of almost every day saw him at the house, and often he would join their little circle at dinner, when one or two of their choicest acquaintance would be invited to meet him.

It was after one of these pleasant, sociable evenings, that among the letters on the breakfast table was one addressed to Miss Aytoun, in handwriting with which they were now all tolerably familiar. Mrs. Aytoun, with a rather significant expression, handed it to her eldest daughter, who only was in the room with her, and Florence's colour rose as she read. It was a proposal. She put it into her mother's hand. The letter was one which any

woman might be proud to receive; brief, and to the point, with no waste of foolish compliments, but flattering in its earnest affection, and the high opinion implied, rather than expressed, of Miss Aytoun's mind and character. Their acquaintance, he said, had not been very long, yet their views and tastes were in many respects so similar, that he was not without hope it might be in his power to make her as happy as he felt sure she would render him, should she consent to be his wife.

"I almost wonder," was Florence's first remark, "that he did not ask Felicia instead; she was his first friend, and he has known her so much longer."

"I am not surprised," replied Mrs. Aytoun, as she kissed her daughter's fair and flushed cheek; "as I said before, men, even the best—and I am sure Mr. Somers"—she spoke enthusiastically—"is the best man on earth—rarely, if ever, are above regarding looks in a wife. Fortunately Felicia does not care for him more than will be quite right when he is her brother."

"I hope not," Florence replied, hesitating; "but neither do I feel for him more than great regard and esteem. I have known him such a very short time."

"But you like him sufficiently to become his wife," said Mrs. Aytoun, looking up in some alarm. Oh! Florence, he is a man whom it would be worse than folly to refuse."

Florence's note of acceptance was written; it was contained in a few lines, expressed with great reticence and propriety, and invited him, in her mother's name as well as her own, to come to the house.

And Felicia, how did she take this news? She was scarcely surprised, for it was but the old story: superseded by Florence! it was just what she might have expected; he had liked her until he knew her sister, and then Florence, as usual, bore off the palm. On lesser occasions, Felicia had sometimes been envious of Florence; but this was a case so great as to call for an effort of principle, and all those religious feelings which Felicia for the last several years had been sedulously cherishing now came to her aid. Some tears she shed in her own room, proudly dashing them away after the first minute, and her manner was perhaps a little shorter than usual to the world in general; but not to Florence; there was no reluctance in the kiss she gave her, no coldness in the few words in which she wished her joy.

The sisters happened to be standing together before a large mirror, in which their two faces appeared in contrast; the difference struck Felicia, and she could not help thinking that, after all, it was very natural; how much more likely Florence was to win any man's fancy. Well! well! this world is not everything; the day might come when she would look back upon those very in-

stances of neglect and mortification, which at present were hard to bear, as among the blessings of her life, if they were the means of weaning her from a world which otherwise she might have loved too well. And Florence, whose path was brightened with so much affection, would not she have more difficulty in steering the "straight and narrow way," and keeping her eye fixed on the distant goal? Felicia (so she thought) must pray for her, that happiness might not become a snare to her; that she be enabled to bear in mind, that the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal.

Florence, if her sister had only known it, was not at this moment quite the object of envy she was supposed to be; now that the first flush of pleasure and elation was over, her thoughts had turned to an episode of the past, with a vividness they had not had in that direction for some time; they recalled one whom, equally worthy, she had rejected for his want of the adventitious advantages of fortune; she wondered what he would think of her engagement, whether he would consider her cold and heartless. Perhaps he had hoped she would wait for him; and, harassed with such misgivings, Florence went to her room less happy than, a few hours before, she would have said her present brilliant prospect must have made her.

Felicia was alone in the drawing-room, when the sound of the door-bell roused her; she knew instinctively whom to expect. He had allowed very little time to elapse between receiving Miss Aytoun's note, and complying with the invitation. The drawing-room door was thrown open, and Mr. Somers announced.

Felicia rose, prepared to give him a sister's greeting. He advanced quickly towards her, and took her hand, almost before she was able to offer it.

"You have made me so happy—it is so good of you—your note was so kind——"

"My sister——" Felicia began—

"Will receive me as a brother, I know," said he.

Did Felicia hear aright? What was he saying? Ere she spoke, he continued—

"I learned to love you at Craven Hall, and though our acquaintance has not been a long one, you have been so kind, and your mother and Miss Florence, too, that I ventured to hope the letter I wrote would not be considered presumptuous."

It was well that, in the astonishment these words produced, the actual intensity of the feeling, mingled as it was with bewilderment, doubt as to whether she heard correctly, took from Felicia the very power of articulation. She stood as if in a dream, hearing his words, indeed, but distrusting the evidence of her senses; unconscious that her hand remained in his, and that he was looking fixedly on her face, with its burning blushes and

troubled eyes, wholly unsuspecting that the confusion he read there was caused by aught else than maidenly modesty, and the novelty of her situation.

That there had been a great mistake somewhere was evident, and Felicia's quick mind leaped to the right conclusion. He had mistaken her for the elder sister, and his letter had been intended for herself; Florence's answer, having been signed only with her initial, had not revealed to him the error he had committed.

Felicia's impulse certainly was to explain at once, in a few abrupt words; but to her first embarrassment succeeded a thought for Florence, and concern for the very awkward position in which she was placed. Felicia possessed, in a great degree, both self-possession and acuteness; surprise had for a moment kept her silent, and in that brief interval she reflected that to speak hastily probably would be to speak wrongly: but to decide on anything in his presence was impossible, so muttering something about her mother, she effected her escape from the room.

Felicia's policy was ever that which is most straightforward; she proceeded at once to consult Florence. At the door of her room, however, she paused, shrinking from the task before her. In spite of their occasional little rivalries, she truly loved her sister, with all the warmth of an honest and good heart; and if she could have altered the intention of the writer of that letter, and given him to Florence as a lover, she would at that moment have done so.

Florence was seated in her own chamber, in a more drooping attitude than quite became a bride elect—prophetic, one might say, of evil tidings. Felicia began as considerably as she could: "There has been a singular mistake, Florence—" She could not beat about to break the news, and simply added, "Mr. Somers has made a strange blunder, he took me for the elder sister, and that letter should not have been addressed to Miss Aytoun."

Florence looked up with as much confusion and surprise as Felicia had herself exhibited a few minutes before; but there was not, in the varied expressions which crossed her face, the pain and distress which her sister had so dreaded seeing; on the contrary, a glance of something like pleasure shone there, and her first words were, "I am not sorry, I am very glad."

Felicia bent upon her a keen look, as much as to say, "Is this acting?"

"I have been so unhappy, Felicia," Florence continued: "I could not help thinking of Walter"—she did not often speak of him thus simply by his Christian name—"and wondering if he would think me dishonourable, and despise me."

"Yet you accepted Mr. Somers," Felicia could not refrain from saying.

"I did not understand my own feelings this morning; I was flattered and gratified. Besides, mamma said it would be madness to refuse such a man as Mr. Somers. But he will not be lost to the family," she added, with a look of some humour, "so all will be right."

"How do you mean?" asked the other, bluntly; "are we to tell him that though one sister answered his letter by mistake, the other is equally at his service?"

"We must tell him nothing," exclaimed Florence, "he must never know. Oh! Felicia, spare my feelings, and do not tell him that I answered that letter."

"Really," said Felicia, "I am not equal to this position, if you mean that I am to meet Mr. Somers as though he were my accepted lover—"

"You like him, I know," said Florence; "so I am not asking you to do anything repugnant to your feelings."

"But he must know some day," suggested Felicia.

"He need never know; our handwriting is almost the same. I signed only with my initial. What a providential thing that I did so! And if he ever thinks again of how he directed that letter, he will only imagine that it found its way to the right person."

It was a curious dilemma, yet not a sad one, as the suppressed amusement in the faces of the two girls testified. Felicia, relieved in her apprehension about her sister, did not feel sad at all. But Florence's expression quietly changed to one of anxiety.

"Felicia! if you love me, you will keep my secret; think of the position I shall be placed in, if it is known that I have accepted an offer that was never meant for me!" Her eyes filled with tears, and she waited eagerly for her sister's answer.

"I will do as well as I can," said Felicia, and Florence was satisfied; for she knew her sister never promised more than she intended to perform.

This little conference went far to draw the sisters together, in a bond of closer union and sympathy than had hitherto existed between them; in the mutual confidence exchanged, the petty rivalry and jealousy of years, all that had ever, even in a slight degree, caused estrangement, seemed to melt away.

Felicia perceived that Florence, envied and admired though she was, but whose heart, until now, had been very much a sealed book to her, had had her trials; and Florence, while her plain sister rose in her esteem, as she found her for once preferred before her, felt also the value of the ready, though unproffering affection that was so prompt to save



her from mortification. From this day their lives diverged, as it were, into two paths, yet it is not too much to say, that they were henceforth closer friends than during all their past years of daily companionship.

Meanwhile Felicia returned to Mr. Somers, "to do as well as she could," and Miss Aytoun awaited her mother, whom an unavoidable engagement, had called from home, and explained to her the state of the case.

Mrs. Aytoun was not very difficult to gain over to her daughters' views. At first, indeed, her surprise amounted even to incredulity; but she would rather anything than that her darling Florence's feelings or dignity should be compromised, and she admitted that the plan proposed was really the best; besides which, he was not, as Florence said, lost to the family; so, on the whole, she was content.

But this was not all. Pleased and elated with the coming event in her family, Mrs. Aytoun was in a kindly mood towards all the world, including Walter Locke; not that her softened feeling in his favour would probably have resulted in any renewed encouragement on her part, had she been left entirely uninfluenced; but Mr. Somers, assuming a brother's interest in Florence's affair, took upon himself to speak to Mrs. Aytoun on the subject; and as he accidentally met Mr. Locke, and was struck with the indications of talent and right

principle that he gave, he was able conscientiously to speak highly in his praise; and so effectively did he do so, that Mrs. Aytoun sent him a cordial invitation to the house. Never were there two happier lovers, or happier brides, than the four who met in Mrs. Aytoun's drawing-room.

Felicia received splendid wedding presents from her husband's rich relations, and Mr. Somers presented her with jewels, the like of which she had rarely even seen. Her own tastes were, in all things, plain and quiet; but these she now waived, to a certain degree, and ordered a handsome trousseau, as befitted the position of the man she was to marry.

Florence had a strong natural inclination for what is costly and becoming, and had always expended a good deal upon her own dress; but on the day of the double wedding, her attire was markedly simple and inexpensive, in spite of a little opposition she had endured from her mother—"White moiré, and Brussels lace, are very well for my rich sister," Florence said, her face as bright as a summer day; "but they are not suited for the wife of a poor man."

Mr. Somers possessed his wife's whole heart and confidence, and after marriage she never concealed the smallest matter from him; not even that which she ever scrupulously guarded from everybody else—the mistake in the direction of MR. SOMERS'S LETTER.

## THE WOOD-ANEMONE.

## I.

**F**AIR Flower, dear Flower, that spreadest  
lightly o'er  
The soil made soft with showers and  
sodden leaves;  
Offspring of sweet young rains that wept  
full sore  
Over dead memories of Autumn eves;  
That comest like a dower of hope and love  
Transplanted here (from flower fields above)  
Ere woods are green:  
And tellst man, "Fear not, the Spring is come,  
Plough up the cold snows, sow the soil with  
seed;  
Train the soft suckle round thy low-walled home;  
For thou art heir to all the Summer's meed"—  
We welcome thee, for Nature at thy sight  
Relents, and soon her softest and most bright  
Of moods are seen.

## II.

Fair Flower, sweet Flower, thou movest me to  
make  
One slender rune to weave thy memory in,  
Rather for my behoof than for thy sake;  
That I may find some peace from the world's  
din  
When I betake me to the thought-browed muse,  
And join with her in drinking thy white dews;  
Or mark, Anemone,  
The dear sweet comfort in thy still pale face,  
Like his who hovered o'er our passioned  
Lord,  
And shed a soothing light in that grim place  
What time He drank the Cup in meek ac-  
cord:  
Such emblem (all too weak) in thy veined cup  
I see: meantime with smiles thou lightest up  
This dark Gethsemane. B.

## LITTLE MOTHER ELSIE.

**E**LSIE! Elsie! rise quickly, child, and get my breakfast; bestir thee, my little one, for I see the omens of a storm in the rude wind and leaden-hued sky, and I will get my perilous journey along yon mountain path over before it bursts; for if it should overtake me out there, with no shelter to be had, it's not much that the life of Jeanot du Tertre will be worth."

"I'm coming," was Elsie's reply, said in a sleepy voice, as she jumped up, and rubbed her eyes to make them open a little wider; and in less than ten minutes' time the *petite fille* emerged from the garret which served as a sleeping-room for all the children of the family, and also a storeroom for the huge logs of wood, which Elsie's father converted into a thousand little toys. The sale of these ingeniously-made articles (for the carving of which he was deservedly famous) served to keep his motherless family in comparatively easy circumstances, and it was to attend the great market at which he always found a ready sale for any quantity of his merchandise, that he was about to undertake the journey we have already mentioned.

The town he desired to reach was at a distance of twenty miles from the little village in which he lived (and whose forest furnished him with the materials necessary to his calling), across a wild and mountainous part of the country, where, if overtaken by one of the severe snow-storms, the traveller stood but a very poor chance of arriving at his destination alive.

Elsie soon had the peat fire burning cheerily on the hearth; and when her father entered the little log room which served as sitting-room and kitchen, a plentiful breakfast was laid out to welcome him. He sat down and made a hearty meal, for he knew that that was the very best compliment he could pay to her clever housekeeping, and one that would please her far better than any words could have done.

After having satisfied his hunger, he sent Elsie to fetch the pack of toys, which she placed carefully in a large leathern wallet or bag, made with straps to fasten across the shoulders; for Jeanot must carry his wares on his own back, as man and beast could not together traverse the narrow, precipitous mountain path.

"Farewell, my child," said Jeanot, parting the golden curls (which would tumble into the child's eyes), and kissing her pretty face. "Should the storm last many days, do not fret thy little heart for me, for I shall abide safely at thy uncle's dwelling till all fear be past; therefore look not for me till the snow hath melted from the mountain side. I need not bid thee be careful of the little ones, for

thou art already careful and steady far beyond thy years."

"Farewell, my father," said Elsie, returning her father's kiss. "May God speed thee on thy way, and bring thee safe back to us."

"Tush, child; the danger is not so great. Thou hast always a word about God on thy tongue's end. It's not much that he'd think about me to save me from peril; it's only good folk like the minister and such that he'd care for. Do not trouble thy brain about these matters, but go about thy business like a good maid."

"He cares for all—rich and poor, high and low, dear father, and would have us always thinking of him, nor yet neglect the matters of life. It never troubles me to think of him, but is a help to me in all things."

"Thou art a strange child; but I cannot complain. Thou hast ever been a dutiful one, and hast done thy best to fill thy dead mother's place; and now, once more, farewell," saying which, Jeanot rose, and, habiting himself in a warm cloak and cap, with a few more words, took his departure, Elsie all the while standing at the cottage door, and watching him till lost to her sight.

Then turning slowly back into the one living-room of the house, she set about preparing breakfast for the little family dependent on her loving care.

Little Elsie's life was a brave one, full of a self-denial and womanly tenderness that was all the more remarkable as contrasted with her youthfulness and the habits of the peasant class to which she belonged.

As a child, during her mother's lifetime, she had shown a strange and wayward disposition, loving solitude, and never so happy as when climbing the rugged mountain sides, terrifying her friends by her intrepidity and evident unconsciousness of danger.

The only being who had any real influence over her was the white-haired English minister, who had deservedly won the love of his peasant flock, and in some cases had brought them to love the great Master to whom his heart and life were devoted. With Ella, whom he had known from the cradle, his endeavours had been attended with the happiest result; and though only thirteen when called upon to fill her mother's place, she had proved how deeply the seed had taken root.

Nor had the change that had taken place in her made her morose or unsocial; it had only tended to bring her spirit into subjection, and make her ready to devote her life to whatever position she might be called on to fill.

Being devoted to the part which she had chosen, it had become an object of her life to bring her friends, and especially her father, to share the light

which was now shining so brightly on herself. True that the simple folk in that primitive Swiss village spoke of her as strange and unaccountable, and seemed to think her slightly demented; true, also, that her father totally ignored the subject unless it was forced upon him, and, in that case, turned it off in a manner that admitted of no further discussion; still Elsie did not despair, but strove by her conduct, both at home and with the neighbours, to illustrate that which she was never allowed to talk of.

Jeanot had advanced far on his way when his little family had all assembled to partake of the meal their "little mother," as they called her, had prepared for them. That over, she sent Thekla, the next eldest, out with the goats, which supplied them with the milk that forms a principal part of the Swiss peasant's food, in order that they might graze on the rich pasture grass which grew abundantly in the neighbourhood. Her own business for the day was making the far-famed goat's-milk Gruyère cheese, by the sale of which she added considerably to the household funds.

Could we have seen her with our English eyes, we should certainly have thought her a queer-looking little body, and perhaps have been inclined to have given the verdict for prettiness in our own favour.

Her hair was strained tightly from her face, and hung in three braids down her back, the ends of which were tied with bright-hued ribbons; she wore a short, full, stuff dress, and a thick white muslin boddiece, and her feet were bare.

The afternoon was coming to an end, when Elsie's labours as a dairy-maid were broken by the arrival of a neighbour, who had evidently come to have a chat.

After Elsie had put away the basins and pans, so that she might give her friend a better welcome, they sat down together, old Ursule being only too glad to find a listener to her string of gossip.

"Hast heard the news, *ma mignonne*?" she asked of Elsie, after having entertained her with a series of nothings for quite a quarter of an hour. Then, without waiting for an answer, she went on—"It's about Jean Guillot, who lives upon the mountain side. They say he is dying, and not a soul near him. He always made the neighbours hate him; and though he didn't mind it then, he'll be sorry enough for it now, I'll be sure."

And after this style Ursule chatted on, but was quite unheeded by her *mignonne*; for an idea had come into Elsie's mind. Jean was disliked by everybody, and had been very uncivil to her; but was it not her duty to do what she could for him in his need? nay, would it not be an opportunity that she might never have again of doing something for God? Old Ursule stopped suddenly, and stared in a frightened manner when Elsie said—

"Poor Jean! I must go and stay with him a

while; we cannot let him die without a soul near," and began hastily to put on her cloak and hat ready to go to the sick man's bedside.

"I might have known it," Ursule said at last, in a tone so full of despair that Elsie laughed outright. "It's just like her, running into danger as if her life was not worth a straw."

Elsie assured Ursule that she was not afraid, but as she spoke she remembered her father's predictions, though she tried not to feel uneasy.

"Look at the sky, *ma petite*," said the old woman, as if guessing her thoughts, "and the wind too. There's a storm not far off, and you'll be killed, *mignonne*. What folly! what madness!" said poor Ursule, who could have bitten off her tongue for what it had said, if it would only be any good.

Giving Thekla directions what to do in her absence, and promising to return that night, she set out, old Ursule, seeing that she had made up her mind to go, offering to stay with the little ones till she came back.

It was growing dark, and the faint, musical notes of many distant *render-vaches* (cow-calls) sounded pleasantly in her ears; for in the Swiss villages the cattle are not driven, but taught to answer to a peculiar call, by which they are collected from every direction and led home. Running along the path, she soon reached the house on the side of the mountain, and tapped at the door. For some time she waited, but at last heard a very feeble "*Entrez*." She was shocked to find how very ill the poor man was, and, taking off her things, set about making him a little more comfortable. Having shaken up his pillows and arranged the bed-clothes, she lit the fire and prepared him some food, which he ate thankfully, falling asleep soon afterwards. Then putting a mug of milk ready by his side, and leaving a bright fire and tidy room, she set off home.

The wind had risen, and now swept down the mountain with a force that almost blew Elsie along, and it had grown quite dark, so that she was obliged to walk very carefully. She had got but half way when the snow-flakes began to fall. Elsie kept bravely on her way, but the cruel snow fell faster and faster, till she was almost blinded, and was groping her way through the white masses, and the path was nowhere, and it was dark, dark.

\* \* \* \* \*

Poor little Elsie had lost the pathway, and had fallen down a ravine; but had been saved by some bushes and a rocky ledge. There she had been found by one of the neighbours, and carried home, as was supposed, dead. Old Ursule wrung her hands and wept as she nursed her "child," and when Jeanot arrived, as he did while Elsie was still weak and ill, she took all the blame to herself. For Jeanot was very angry with Elsie for her madness in undertaking such a journey after his warning, and told her that God, whom she had been trying to please, had not thought

enough of her act to bring her safely through the storm, and forbade her from that time to speak to him or the children about religion, totally ignoring the fact that it was God's mercy that had saved her from death.

Elsie was truly sorry at the result, so different from that she had hoped for; but she still believed that her father would be brought to acknowledge his error, though this untoward event seemed to be leading him in such a different direction.

The time that she was looking for was not far distant, and this was how it came to pass:—

Jeanot had lately been very unfortunate; the success that had as yet always attended his occupation almost deserting him. A man had come to the village who could make and carve the toys far better than he could, and, accordingly, the new-comer found a ready market, while Jeanot's goods were left on his hands, and Elsie, who worked harder than ever, could not make her earnings suffice to keep the family from absolute poverty.

Her father grew morose and sullen under this misfortune, the little ones were afraid to speak to him, or if they did summon courage to do so, he answered them in so surly a tone, and with such unkind words that they would creep wonderingly away, nor come near him again for many days.

At last they wanted for food, and at this unhappy time Jeanot, who had almost refused to eat for several days past, fell ill, and was like to die.

Food must be had for him, that Elsie knew; but from whence she was to obtain it she did not know. She had left her father asleep, and was sitting despondingly, wondering what was to be done, when a tap at the door aroused her from her reverie.

She bade the comer enter, and the door opened to admit Jean Guillot, who had long ago recovered from the illness in which Elsie had risked so much for his good.

"I heard in the village that trouble had come to thee, little neighbour," he began, "and I have come to ask what I can do for thee; thou must make use of me as thou wilt," he continued, hurriedly, giving her no time to thank or refuse him. "I know thou dardest not leave thy sick father, and I will fetch thee one or two things," he added, with a delicacy of nature that Elsie had not credited him with.

He had heard from the villagers of Elsie's necessity, and moved with gratitude for her kindness, had hastened to place his abundance at her disposal, going to her before getting anything for her, so that she might have no opportunity of refusing. Before long he returned, bringing with him many tempting and nourishing bits for the sick man, which Elsie thankfully took to her father, and was gratified to see him enjoy.

Then Jean insisted on her setting out a meal for

herself and the family, urging that he was ravenous, and was tired of taking his food alone.

The little ones were delighted, and their appetites showed plainly the privation they had undergone. They took a wonderful fancy to their new friend, and indeed his nature seemed quite altered, for before long he was capering about with them, and making himself quite their plaything, in very striking contrast to his usual lonely and self-loving habits.

Once Elsie tried to thank him, but he stopped her by saying that had it not been for her bringing him food when he was faint for want, and unable to help himself, he would not have been there to show his appreciation of her goodness, and he added that it was hearing of her narrow escape from so frightful an accident, and what she had risked to serve him, that had shown him how utterly selfish his life had been, and made him resolve to turn it to a better purpose.

Elsie felt very thankful as she recounted to her father what Jean had said, and asked him if he did not think that it was a good thing that had happened; and, though he would not admit it, he could not deny it.

Want of food and rest had told on Jeanot's constitution, and he grew alarmingly worse. Once when he thought himself dying he asked Elsie to pray for him, promising that if God would but spare him he would serve him ever afterwards, and from this period lead a new life. And Elsie did pray for him, prayed that he might not die till he had learnt to love God, and serve him. The sick man listened while she prayed, and then fell quietly asleep. For many weary hours Elsie watched and waited, but at last her father woke, refreshed in body and soul, although weak as an infant.

From that time he recovered slowly and surely, and in a short time was able to walk about with the assistance of Jean's strong arm.

He faithfully kept the promise made in the hour of his danger, and was joined and aided in his new faith by Jean Guillot, who at Jeanot de Tertre's desire had given up his mountain home, and come to live with his friends, and gone into partnership with them.

Jeanot became once more a thriving man, for with the aid of some of Jean Guillot's capital he was able to buy models, from which he soon learnt to carve as well as anybody, and, being better known, he was more patronised by his employers, finding which the competitor quitted the field, leaving Jeanot in sole possession.

Wherever there is sickness or misery "Little Mother Elsie" is to be found, and in all her charitable missions she is warmly aided by the once unbelieving Jeanot de Tertre, and the no longer misanthropical Jean Guillot.

L. M. C.